# Comprehensive Examination

# Educational Technology Leadership Master’s Program

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# **Comprehensive Examination of Educational Technology Leadership**

# This Comprehensive Exam will encompass my total internship experience as it relates to Lamar University’s Educational Technology Leadership Master’s Program. Topics to be addressed are my personal goals, leadership goals, vision for educational technology, knowledge I’ve gained through the program, reflection of the most beneficial courses, personal professional development plans over the next three years, and an update curriculum vitae of my professional background and experiences.

# **Career and Leadership Goals**

I am currently employed as a district level Instructional Technology Facilitator in the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). I have been employed with SAISD for five months. I was previously employed with the Southwest Independent School District in San Antonio for 12 years.

Throughout my career I have served in the following capacities: 5th Grade teacher, 5th Grade Level Facilitator, Campus Science Facilitator, Teacher Mentor through the Our Lady of the Lake Mentorship Program, served as a member of the District Science Committee, District Technology Committee, Campus Improvement Team, Campus Instructional Team, Campus Leadership Team, Coordinator of the Campus Technology Committee, and Campus Instructional Technologist.

In 2005, I was voted as Teacher of the Year for Kriewald Road Elementary. I was selected by committee and served as the 2005 District Teacher of the Year for the Southwest Independent School District. I was awarded the ExCEL Award for Excellence in Education, received the "Golden Apple" trophy, and was a nominee for the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

My future aspirations are to become a District Level Technology Director. After adequate time and acquisition of the knowledge and skills of that position, I would like to advance to the level of an Executive Director or an Assistant Superintendent of Technology. I want to be in a position that will allow me the opportunity to “Establish a shared vision and strategic technology plan that would help move my organization in a new and exciting direction” (Casey, 2004, p. 26) and that would support and adequately prepare students to be productive citizens in a society that has become highly dependent on digital-age work.

**Vision of Educational Technology**

In my mind’s eye, I picture a learning environment, within each classroom that would adequately represent the digital age of the 21st century. It would be evident that teachers have learned how to “Put engagement before content when teaching and have paid attention to how their students learn, and value what their students know and are capable of doing” (Prensky, 2006, p. 2).

Teachers will have learned how to incorporate and capitalize on their student’s knowledge of digital communication, and “Have adopted and incorporated into their lessons new systems for communicating, (instant messaging), sharing (blogs), exchanging (peer-to-peer technology), creating (Flash), meeting (3D worlds), collecting (downloads), coordinating (wikis), evaluating (reputation systems), searching (Google), analyzing (SETI), reporting (camera phones), programming (modding), socializing (chat rooms), and even learning (Web surfing)” (Prensky, 2006, p. 2).

Understanding that none of the above would be possible without a highly effective technology plan that included and addressed the four essential components of technology implementation, as outlined by the STaR Chart, equitably in regards to planning and financial backing. These four areas are Teaching and Learning; Educator Preparation and Development; Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support; and Infrastructure for Technology.

My vision of a model classroom and where I would like to see Instructional Technology be with in my district and beyond our boundaries, would be based on a realistic view of what could possibly be attained in five years and with the availability of funds. A main source of guidance and information I would refer to from the beginning would be the Horizon Report: 2009 K-12 Edition, which is “An ongoing research project that seeks to identify and describe emerging technologies likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning, research, or creative expression within education around the globe” (Johnson, Levine, Smith, and Smythe, 2009, p. 3).

Our district would have a well-developed technology plan that “Ensured all schools were equipped with the necessary technology hardware and infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21st century learner, and hardware standards were developed for each site” (Southwest Independent School District, 2009).

Also included in this plan would be “An approved list of computers, laptops, projectors, interactive boards and other technology related equipment that would be supported through the District Technology Division within our schools. These documents would be utilized as a guide for all campuses when planning or purchasing new technologies for a campus site. As technology progresses and upgrades to technologies are made, updates to the documents would also be made” (Southwest ISD Technology Department, 2009).

As a result of having all of the above in place and fully supported by both district and campus level administration, each classroom would be equipped with the following:

* 1 Mounted Interactive White Board
* 1 Interactive tablet
* 1 Mounted LCD projector
* Ceiling mounted speakers
* 1 dedicated teacher laptop
* 5 Desktop computers
* All computers loaded with Windows 2007
* All computers loaded with Microsoft Office 2010
* 1 Student Response System
* 1 High-end digital camera
* Flip camera
* Headset for each computer
* Tripod on wheels
* Flatbed scanner
* 42’or larger flat panel TV for smaller work groups mounted on a mobile cart
* Dedicated video origination capabilities consisting of 1 camera (mounted on same mobile cart as flat panel TV) used for:
  + Recording sessions
  + Video conferencing
  + Distance learning
* 5 Web Cams (at least one per Desktop) to allow for Desktop Video Conferencing
* Cable and satellite and internet based programming
* Adjustable light fixtures (dimmer switches).
* 5 Computers on Wheels per grade-level (w/25-30 laptops on each)
* 1 Document camera
* Continue to provide ongoing training and support

I realize that this list represents several thousands of dollars worth of spending and a tremendous amount of commitment from both district and campus allotted funds, but in order to meet the diverse “Needs of our mixed-ability classrooms” (Wahl & Duffield, 2005, p. 2), and help our educators prepare their students to become highly qualified wage earners in a our “Increasing digital and networked world” (Armstrong & Warlick, 2004, p. 22), spending is both warranted and frankly, should be expected by all of our constituents.

**Knowledge Gained**

I have learned that despite my comfort in the use of technology, as far back as high school (in the late 80’s), I do not consider myself to be in the category of a “Digital native,” but rather more of a “Digital immigrant.” These terms were coined by Marc Prensky, in his work

*Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* published in 2001.

When I decided to enroll in the online Master’s Program, I felt comfortable enough in my technology skills that I would be able to handle to it. However, I quickly realized that, because I am indeed a digital native, the online environment was a challenge for me. I had never before taken an online course and as a result found myself having difficulty adjusting. Even though I have made significant improvement, I still find it very difficult to read material off the computer and end up printing most of my course work out and organizing them in 3-ring binders, which is of course characteristic of a digital immigrant.

One of the greatest benefits of actually experiencing, from a user’s perspective, an online course environment, is that it will help provide me with the needed insight as I attempt to fulfill a job requirement and goal of becoming a certified Texas Virtual School Network TxVSN instructor.

Now that I have in-depth firsthand experience in an online learning environment, I find myself excited about the opportunity to learn as much as I can about the development of an online learning course. Online learning is not something that today’s educators have much experience with (Wikiaeducation.com, 2009), but I am willing to learn more about it.

The skills and knowledge that I have gained throughout this program has undoubtedly strengthened by abilities as a technologist. It was not until I accepted the role of a district level facilitator that I was truly able to express and demonstrate the depth of my learning. It has been amazing for me to find that almost all of what this program provides has been spot on in regards to applicability. It is because of this that I feel more confident and empowered with the knowledge and experience needed to be able to influence and participate in the critical development of future technology planning.

I want to be able to help transform and create a “Sustainable classroom that allows teachers to build upon strategies that they already know and use, and focus on the technology to support and expand upon them” (Tschirgi, 2009, p. 1). In addition, I want to help

Maximize the use of digital tools to better reach essential learning goals, expanding classroom boundaries so that students gain real-world experiences and become global thinkers, and creating experiences that satisfy diverse learning styles and learner dispositions. The result can be turbo boost that takes learning into orbit – gets students ready for the 21st century world where they will work and learn (Boss & Krauss, 2007, p. 22).

**References**

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